

Lessons Learned Record of Interview

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Strategy

There were always two sets of objectives. One was the counterterrorism objective, which is absolutely the only we are spending any money there and the other was spending the money to support a counterinsurgency mission. There were conflicts between those two sets of objectives and those conflicts were usually resolved in favor of the counterterrorism objective.

Governments don't really have strategies. They have processes that produce outcomes. The process does not have as much power as people think to change circumstances.

Lessons Learned Record of Interview

(When the war started) we were still in the kind of no nation building mode. (Recalls a meeting on Sept. 24, 2001 to discuss post-conflict plans for Afghanistan). The idea was to give the development agenda to the UN which they did not because they thought the UN wasn't important but because they thought nation-building wasn't important.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

(Mentions Ashraf Ghani paper "Securing Afghanistan's Future" written for the first Berlin conference in 2002)

If your strategist doesn't control the money or the troops he doesn't have much of a strategy.

ANSE

Fahim's view was that they could continue using the militias they had assembled against the Taliban. Ashraf's view was that they should all be demobilized and the forces should be built from the ground up. Then Rumsfeld issued his fatwa. US forces were not to be involved in disarming or demobilizing Afghan forces.

The Security Working Group drafted the annexes to the Bonn agreement on raising an international security force and on building an Afghan national army. When we were drafting the Bonn agreement we envision ISAF expanding to keep the millions who were returning back to Afghanistan secure. The US was not willing to secure the cities themselves so it was agreed that ISAF would expand over time.

Rumsfeld didn't want the stabilization agenda. The Germans had big ambitions for the north.

Bonn

We were all hoping that there would be a reconciliation deliverable at the Bonn conference but it didn't happen. ((b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was involved then)

Before the Afghanistan Compact and ANDS we started talking about the post-Bonn agenda. Brahimi, Arnault, (Amrullah) Saleh met at Clingendael and Brahimi wrote a non-paper outlining the post-Bonn reconstruction plan. (Brahimi was pushing a national reconciliation process but met resistance at the UN). Everyone wanted the Taliban to disappear.

They wanted a political declaration about the commitments to Afghanistan after the Bonn process was complete. They called it the Kabul Declaration....what made the Bonn Agreement good was that it had clear benchmarks. The Kabul Declaration set out the goals and the modalities were in the annexes which was just log rolling between agencies. People would get up at the meetings and say they wanted add this or that on development or gender and no could say no because it sounded good. It was all about goals and everyone stopped talking about benchmarks.

Lessons Learned Record of Interview

Bonn was an agreement between Afghans on how to rebuild security but they didn't have the resources to do those things by themselves. The reality is that the big players weren't interested in doing anything like that.

There was no agreement between the Afghan government and the U.S. government on a counterinsurgency strategy. We were giving them hundreds of millions in cash and they had nothing to spend it on.

After the [Bonn] process ended without the Taliban or Pakistan being accommodated in any way then in 2006 the insurgency took off and they had to explain why so then came the counternarcotics agenda.

Counternarcotics and Security

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was emotional about the counternarcotics issue.

President Karzai didn't think that attacking the Taliban's livelihood was a good idea and in the end all that it did was change the distribution and raise the price and increase incentives to corruption.

The whole issue of security was focused on the troops. The idea was that if we spent a lot of money building up the Afghan National Security Forces the problem would be solved.

There was not much appetite for what we called threat reduction, for regional diplomacy and bringing the Taliban into the peace process.

Reconciliation

Re: Clinton's view on reconciliation: Oct. 2009 trilateral on AfPak policy in Washington—
Sec. Clinton was very reluctant to move on this because for one women are very important constituency for her and she couldn't sell making a bargain with the Taliban. If you want to be the first woman president you cannot leave any hint or doubt that you're not the toughest person on national security.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was tasked to draft a strategy at the start of the Obama administration. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

Re : negotiations—We didn't walk away from it we actively blocked it. The U.S. refused to do it and the result was that you couldn't stabilize a country when the government you were aimed at stabilizing was trying to eradicate a part of the Afghan population.

CERP was meant to help with the strategy but most of the CERP money went for force protection. They were thinking about people more sympathetic to them.

The fight between Petraeus and Eikenberry over the generators in Kandahar was a perfect example. Because the Kajaki Dam project could never get off the ground the only way to get power in Kandahar was to use generators. Eikenberry was totally against it but of course Petraeus had his own back channels and ways of moving things forward.

Lessons Learned Record of Interview

If your definition of success is kicking the problem into the next administration or the next commander than what we did in Afghanistan looks like success.

AID Coordination

(Geneva Accords failed because there was no willingness to monitor and enforce) Brahimi's idea of the "light footprint" was the civilian footprint was supposed to be small and development would be implemented to the ARTF

Aid coordination worked to some extent but it wasn't enough. Our military operation was the largest industry in Afghanistan. They doled out money. They doled out jobs...The only reason we were spending billions of dollars was the support of the counterterrorism strategy. The real objective was always just to disrupt and dismantle. Nothing else mattered.

Corruption

The basic assumption was that corruption is an Afghan problem and we are the solution.

Holbrooke hated Karzai. He thought he was corrupt as hell. But there is one indispensable ingredient for corruption—money—and we were the ones who had the money.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

